

U. S. S E N A T E



Republican Policy Committee

347 Russell Senate Office Building (202)224-2946 <http://www.senate.gov/~rpc/>

December 3, 1996

Clinton Rolls Out Red Carpet for Butcher of Beijing

Communist Chinese General's Visit Marks Clinton's Final Abandonment of 1992 Pledges

Last month, the Pentagon announced a 10-day visit to the United States by a high-profile delegation of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), to commence December 5, 1996. The 20-member delegation, which will tour a number of U.S. military facilities, will be headed by Defense Minister General Chi Haotian [Chur Howt-yan], a noted anti-American hardliner in Beijing's political/military establishment and a major force behind the Tiananmen Square Massacre in June 1989. He has also been in the forefront of those advocating use of military force against Taiwan, as illustrated by the missile tests and live ammunition exercises conducted in the Taiwan Strait earlier this year. In short, the Clinton Administration could not have found a more odious, anti-American, anti-democratic figure in the communist Chinese leadership on whom to lavish American hospitality.

The military visit signals Bill Clinton's final abandonment of his promise during the 1992 campaign that he would base U.S. policy toward China on Beijing's respect for human rights and responsible international behavior. During his recent tour of the Far East, he announced that General Chi's visit will be followed by reciprocal U.S./Chinese state visits over the next two years, with an Al Gore trip to Beijing expected early in 1997. "The White House hopes the reciprocal visits . . . will cement the first steps toward improving a relationship that has foundered badly in the last four years over human rights, trade, nuclear proliferation and Taiwan." [*New York Times*, "Clinton and Chinese President Agree to Exchange State Visits," 11/25/96]

Clinton Kicks Off New Term with Another Broken Pledge

After four years in office, reciting yet one more Clinton reversal from his campaign pledges may seem superfluous, if not tedious. But for the sake of historical accuracy, it should be recalled that in 1992 then-candidate Bill Clinton harshly criticized the Bush Administration's decision to renew China's "Most-Favored-Nation" (MFN) trade status, despite widespread abuses of human rights, exemplified by the Tiananmen Square Massacre. "We will condition favorable trade terms with repressive regimes — such as China's Communist regime — on respect for human rights, political liberalization, and responsible international conduct." [*Putting People First*, pp. 138-139] Likewise, the 1992 party platform for the Clinton/Gore ticket promised to condition "favorable trade terms for China on respect for human rights in China and Tibet, greater market access for U.S. goods, and responsible conduct on weapons proliferation."

In line with these campaign promises, in June 1993 President Clinton renewed China's MFN status pursuant to an executive order that made further extension (beginning in 1994) contingent upon improvement on human rights.

Beijing's policies during 1993 and 1994 may well have been a deliberate effort to humiliate the Clinton Administration. As the 1994 MFN renewal deadline approached, not only did China's human rights record not improve, it worsened. In what can only be considered a calculated affront, prominent pro-democracy activists were arrested during Secretary of State Christopher's March 1994 visit to Beijing. (For details, see RPC's "Will Beijing Shanghai Taipei?: Clinton Administration Policies Have Long Invited Beijing's Saber-Rattling," 3/18/96.) Other human rights abuses, such as persecution of Chinese Christians in the "home church" movement, have also intensified. By May 1994, denied even a fig-leaf to hide the failure of his policy, Bill Clinton announced he was unconditionally renewing China's MFN status and "de-linking" it from human rights, stating that his previous policy had "outlived its usefulness."

Now, with the red carpet being rolled out for General Chi, the Clinton Administration is dropping the other shoe, moving from surrendering its pretense of supporting human rights to actively courting the most detestable elements of the Beijing ruling circles. Making matters worse, this latest capitulation comes at a time when the PLA is stepping up its activities to acquire sophisticated technology with military applications: "When you add it all up, it is clear that China's military is exploiting the existing international technology transfer rules — even breaking specific agreements and U.S. laws — to modernize as fast as it can. Given China's increasingly aggressive posture, I am very concerned that we're selling our edge in military technology to a nation that may well be our adversary someday." [House National Security Committee Chairman Floyd Spence, Committee Press Release. 11/21/96. Chairman Spence was commenting on the release of four U.S. government reports detailing technology leakage to China.] In addition, the Chinese record on weapons proliferation — and the Clinton Administration's laxity — is a continuing concern. For example:

"The Clinton administration soft-pedaled criticism of Chinese nuclear cooperation with Pakistan yesterday, but critics said Washington has given Beijing the go-ahead to sell atomic technology to Islamabad. . . . 'All we know is that, so far, the Chinese have lied to us for a decade and a half and continue to support nuclear technology to countries trying to make the bomb,' said Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, a Washington-based group. 'The Chinese continue to break their word, and we continue to do nothing about it.'" [*Washington Times*, "U.S. eases pressure on China over nuke deal with Pakistan," 12/3/96]

In light of the foregoing, the decision to receive General Chi can only be seen as a Clinton Administration stamp of approval.

General Chi: A Perfect Symbol of the New Clinton Line

General Chi Haotian, Defense Minister since 1993, is the perfect symbol of the new Clinton opening to the brutal Beijing leadership against which he inveighed in 1992. A career political commissar — i.e., not a military man *per se*, but a Communist Party functionary, dedicated to preserving the PLA as an ideologically committed force serving the Party, not the Chinese nation — General Chi represents the worst tendencies in the Beijing leadership. Among the notable facts:

- ***Tiananmen Square and Human Rights:*** At the time of the bloody suppression of the pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in early June 1989, General Chi was Chief of the PLA General Staff, roughly equivalent to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in the United States: "As Chief of Staff, Chi bears major responsibility for the violence unleashed upon Beijing's citizenry by his troops." [*Massacre in Beijing*, the editors of *Time* magazine, Time Books, 1989, p. 33] In operational control and responsible for the detailed planning of the assault on the demonstrators, General Chi took two crucial actions to ensure that the PLA troops would fire on Beijing's residents when they entered the city: First, he kept his troops, mostly young, unsophisticated peasant soldiers, on the outskirts of Beijing under ten days of intense political indoctrination, telling them repeatedly they were protecting the city from "hoodlums." [*The Observer*, London, 6/11/89] Second, General Chi spearheaded the assault with the 27th Army Group, with which he had spent many years as a political officer and which he believed to be politically reliable; on-the-spot observers of the massacre lay blame for most of the killing with the 27th. [*Quelling the People*, Timothy Brook, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 184]
- ***Anti-Americanism and Taiwan:*** In the fall of 1993, General Chi, with seven other top military officials, initiated an unprecedented petition to President Jiang Zemin demanding a tougher line against the United States. Eventually numbering over 180 signatories, the petition included, among other assertions, the claim that during the 1990s "U.S. hegemonists" — a term redolent of Maoist political rhetoric — had "threatened and invaded China with warships," an apparent reference to American exercises in the vicinity of Taiwan. [*The Observer*, London, 2/18/90] General Chi has consistently maintained Beijing's option to "liberate" Taiwan by force, a direct challenge to the United States: "Chi Haotian, China's Defense Minister, even spoke recently of the need for the liberation of Taiwan — language not heard from a Chinese official for over a decade." [*The Economist*, London, 3/16/96] Finally, given his position, Chi undoubtedly has influenced the continuing refusal of China to enter into an agreement with the United States not to target each other's territory with intercontinental missiles, similar to that which we have had for several years with Russia. While missiles can be retargeted quickly, a non-targeting agreement is important as a signal of political intentions. In any case, Bill Clinton's repeated claim that no missiles are today targeted against American territory is certainly not provable, at least as it relates to Chinese missiles.

RPS Staff contact: Jim Jatras 224-2946